

By Nicole Brumbaugh, Times Argus

CASTLETON — Castleton State College graduates were told Saturday that the world they're stepping into needs leaders just like them.

Congressman Peter Welch, who gave the commencement address, told the students that the troubling times America has faced and the economic trials it is facing meant opportunity.

"The good news is that the world you are entering is a world ready for you, the world you are entering needs you," Welch said. "It is ready for your contribution and it requires your leadership."

College Chancellor Timothy Donovan became the first chancellor to address CSC graduate and struck a similar note while keeping it brief.

"You are about to head into a world that needs your best," Donovan said. "It expects your best."

College President David S. Wolk praised Donovan's brevity.

"First speech by a chancellor and the shortest," Wolk said. "We appreciate that."

Wolk and many others addressed the audience who had come to celebrate the graduates' milestone with them.

"Castleton is a small college with a big heart," Wolk said.

The speakers talked about how the family members and friends who were present at the graduation were a big influence on the graduating class.

"You are more than just an audience today," Wolk said. "You are an essential part of the graduation."

Megan Phillips, 2010 class president told her fellow graduates that Castleton State represented opportunity to her.

Those opportunities included trips to different countries and sports. Most of all, she said, she was thankful for the opportunity to attend college.

She urged her classmates to be thankful for their parents who have helped through the years whether they gave money or signed student loans.

"When thinking of Castleton, opportunity is a word that always resonates," Phillips said.

One student was not able to make the graduation.

Nydelis Ortiz-Rivera was in Las Vegas representing Castleton and the state as Miss Vermont USA at the Miss USA pageant, which will be televised tonight.

Ortiz-Rivera came to the country as a child and lived in temporary shelter program in Burlington for a short time but later became a frequent volunteer. She graduated Saturday with a degree in Business Administration.

As the speeches came to a close President Wolk took the podium once more.

"The time has come for the most important activity of the day," said Wolk as the students stood up to receive their diplomas.